



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Shenandoah, VA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the Town of Shenandoah for a Brownfields Pilot. The Town is located on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River in Page County, Virginia. The Town built its heritage as an iron-based industrial center and railroad transportation hub. The decline of the iron industry and the decreased rail traffic due to the advent of diesel engines led to an economic downturn for Shenandoah. The Big Gem Cast Iron Furnace, once the principal producer of iron in the area, was dismantled and later donated to the Town by Bethlehem Steel. Although several small factories have since opened, the economy has remained severely depressed, with an unemployment rate of 10.4% and a poverty rate of 13.1%. In addition, there is very little land available for commercial or industrial enterprise.

Shenandoah plans to target the large Big Gem Furnace tract, which is located in the center of the Town, for cleanup and redevelopment. Although buildings are no longer present and the site is forested, there is still concern about residual contamination. The Town aims to eventually develop a recreational center and establish the Big Gem Furnace Historical Park on the site. The Town believes this redevelopment will attract a significant amount of tourism and create needed area jobs, thereby increasing the quality of life for area residents.

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Shenandoah, Virginia*

**Date of Announcement:**  
July 1998

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets the former Big Gem Cast Iron Furnace tract located in the center of the Town for cleanup and redevelopment.

### Contacts:

Town of Shenandoah  
(540) 652-8164

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 3  
(215) 566-3129

Visit the EPA Region 3 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/brownfld/hmpage1.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

## OBJECTIVES

Shenandoah's primary objective is to clean up and redevelop the Big Gem Cast Iron Furnace site, which will stimulate the local economy and return the area to its former level of prosperity. The Pilot plans to assist in these efforts by conducting environmental assessments and developing a cost-effective cleanup and redevelopment plan for the target site. In addition, the Pilot will evaluate financing alternatives for the project and conduct community outreach activities.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Determining the type, extent, and magnitude of any contamination present in the soil or groundwater at the target site through Phase I environmental assessments;
- Creating a cleanup and redevelopment plan for the target site and determining future steps required to abate pollution;
- Conducting community outreach programs such as public forums and seminars to explain technical project information to the public; and
- Forming partnerships with surrounding small towns and universities to gain support, expertise, and added insights during the project term.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.